

CHENEY, RUMSFELD OUTLINE U.S. COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGY

WASHINGTON, AUGUST 30 -- The United States never will back down in the face of terrorism or abandon its allies, Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared in separate appearances at the national convention of a U.S. veterans organization.

Cheney made remarks in the afternoon to the annual gathering of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 28 in Reno, Nevada. Rumsfeld spoke to the same group that evening.

In his remarks, the vice president enumerated the administration's four-point counterterrorism strategy:

- Prevent attacks before they occur. This means pursuing terrorists both in the United States and around the world, Cheney said.

- Deny terrorists safe haven. Since 9/11, Cheney said, "we've applied the Bush Doctrine: Any person or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent, and will be held to account."

- Stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and keep them from terrorists. In the post-9/11 world, said the vice president, "we have to confront such dangers before they fully materialize." To wait until attacked, he said, would not be self-defense but rather suicide.

- Deny terrorists control of any nation. That is why, said Cheney, the United States continues to fight Taliban and al-Qaida operatives in Afghanistan, why it works with the Pakistani government to fight terrorists and why it fights the remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime and foreign terrorists in Iraq.

Those who criticize the U.S. liberation of Iraq on the grounds that it has "stirred up a hornet's nest" overlook the fact that the United States had no presence at all in Iraq on 9/11, but was attacked regardless, he said.

Cheney quoted President Bush: "The hatred of the radicals existed before Iraq was an issue, and it will exist after Iraq is no longer an excuse."

America is assisting Iraq, Cheney said, because democracy gives men and women "the power to determine their own destiny," and they will "turn their energies to the pursuit of peace" and "ideologies of violence and resentment will lose their appeal."

Rumsfeld stressed that the fight against terrorism is not and will not be cost-free. There will be setbacks in the War on Terror, he said, but that does not mean the United States is losing ground.

Rumsfeld also focused on Iraq, which he called "the epicenter of the War on Terror." Great progress is being made there, he said, though the insurgents want the world to believe otherwise. The enemy in the War on Terror is ruthless, he said, and will lie constantly to advance its cause.

"A country that was once brutalized by a cruel dictatorship," said Rumsfeld, "is working to secure a future under a representative government at peace with its neighbors."

Rumsfeld added that "we will not tell 50 million Afghans and Iraqis that because the going is tough ... we will abandon them to the beheaders, the terrorists, the assassins, and 21st century fascists who seek to attack us abroad and here at home."

"By standing with our friends, we are making a better day possible in the broader Middle East. By supporting democracy, we serve both the ideals and the security of our nation," Cheney said.

The transcript of Cheney's speech
(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060828-4.html>) is available on the White House Web site.

An article focusing on Rumsfeld's remarks
(<http://www.defenselink.mil/News/NewsArticle.aspx?id=626>) is available on the Defense Department Web site.

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